



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 4
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls MT 59405

September 11, 2020

Dear Interested Party:

Thank you for your input and feedback on the environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed action to develop a primitive boat ramp into Little Muddy Creek at the Little Muddy Creek Fishing Access Site. The goal of the proposed action was to provide seasonal launch access for small watercraft into Muddy Creek thereby allowing access to the Missouri River. Improved access to the Missouri River downstream of Cascade would provide additional angling opportunities for the public.

Enclosed is a decision notice document in which Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) explains that based on input received during the public comment period and additional analysis that is necessary, it has been decided at this time the No Action alternative is the best fit.

Please feel free to contact the Fishing Access Site Program Manager, Vicki Robinson, at (406) 454-5854 with any questions you may have. Thank you for your interest and participation.

Sincerely,

Gary Bertellotti
Region Supervisor
FWP Region 4



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE

on

Little Muddy Creek FAS Boat Ramp

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (FWP) proposed to develop a primitive boat ramp into lower Little Muddy Creek at the Little Muddy Creek Fishing Access to allow for the launching and retrieval of small boats for access to the Missouri River.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

FWP is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of its proposed actions to the human and physical environments. In compliance with FWP's MEPA Public Involvement Policy, an Environmental Assessment was prepared by FWP for the proposed project and released on July 2, 2020 for public comment until August 8 2020. The EA was titled *FWP—Little Muddy Creek FAS Boat Ramp*. The EA was the subject of an FWP press release, was circulated to local sporting groups, and was posted and remains available for viewing on the FWP webpage.

Summary of Public Comment and FWP Response

Twelve commenters provided input during the public comment period that ended on August 8, 2020. All comments were made via email and 8 were opposed, 3 supportive and 1 was neither in support or opposition of the proposed action. Among the comments within the scope of the EA the concern of site use, specifically road access road/parking improvement at Muddy Creek FAS arose and the concern validity warrants further evaluation. If the primitive ramp was moderately to heavily utilized the current primitive access road may not endure the vehicle traffic. Required road improvement and was not considered in the EA. Comment summaries and the Department's response are as follows:

Comment Summary 1

Support for development of the primitive boat ramp at Little Muddy Creek FAS.



Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment Summary 2

General concern regarding the Little Muddy Creek access road to the ramp and/or parking at the site.

Response: The access road from the developed parking lot to the proposed ramp site is primitive. Commenters concerns are valid, and pursuit of the proposed primitive ramp should be accompanied with development/improvement of the existing primitive access road because there is uncertainty whether the current state of the primitive access road could withstand the use associated with the ramp access. Intent for parking was to have vehicles park in the already developed parking area.

Comment Summary 3

Comments regarding the cost of the proposed action and question if the seasonally limited access warranted the expenditure.

Response: Cost of the proposed primitive development was anticipated to be minimal whereas the primitive ramp as described would be constructed using FAS staff and equipment. Additional cost to the regional FAS program would be the price to purchase the necessary gravel.

Comment Summary 4

Concern regarding the increased use at the Dunes FAS including parking at the Dunes FAS, access road and maintenance of the access road.

Response: Maintenance and parking improvement at the Dunes FAS was outside the scope of this EA.

Comment Summary 5

The site would create additional user conflicts between motorized use and non-motorized users.

Response: Goal of the proposed action was to provide seasonal launch access for small watercraft into Muddy Creek thereby allowing access



to the Missouri River. Improved access to the Missouri River downstream of Cascade would provide additional angling opportunities for the public. Increased use at any location has the potential to create additional user conflict because of the additional users however improved access and additional angling opportunity is the goal of the proposed project.

Comment Summary 6

Ramp construction will degrade and cause erosion problems.

Response: The primitive ramp will result in some stream bank being disturbed to allow for an approach that has a gradient that allows the launching and retrieval of small watercraft. Site specific degradation would be limited to the footprint of the project and minimal erosion problems are anticipated.

Comment Summary 7

Development will reduce or limit accessible area for waterfowl hunting and habitat.

Response: Site development will not prevent the hunting of waterfowl at the site. However, it is conceivable that ramp development may limit access on the foot print of the new launch location.

Comment Summary 8

Access from Little Muddy Creek will be very limited, will the channel be dredged?

Response: No, there is not intention of dredging the channel of Little Muddy Creek. The primitive ramp would only be used seasonally when water levels allowed.

Comment Summary 9

Increased traffic will result in increased noxious weeds that need to be controlled.

Response: Increased traffic does have the potential to increase the noxious weed control however all FAS have weed management requirements including Little Muddy Creek. It is anticipated the additional weed control associated with the launch will add minimally to the current weed management requirements.



Comment Summary 10

Multiple comments suggesting leaving the site as is for various reasons.

Response: Thanks for the comments, the suggestion will be considered.

Comment Summary 11

Multiple comments regarding the Whitetail Trail Access Road and causing more maintenance fees for the Home Owners Association.

Response: Fees, financial assistance and maintenance for White Trail Road is outside the scope of this EA.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, majority of public comment opposition, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision at this time to not proceed with the preferred alternative and select the No Action Alternative at this time.

Gary Bertellotti
Regional Supervisor
FWP Region 4